

# MERCURY

## NEWS

### 261 scientists sign open letter calling for 'deep cuts' to greenhouse gas emissions

Rohan Smith, news.com.au

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Experts specialising in fields including climate, fire and weather science have written an open letter to Australia's leaders demanding urgent and immediate action on climate change.

The 261 scientists came together following what has been one of Australia's wildest and most deadly bushfire seasons to [declare they have had enough](#).

"In many ways, this letter is the product of despair as scientists witnessed the deadly fire season unfold," Australian National University climate scientist Professor Nerilie Abram wrote.

"Scientists have been warning policy makers for decades that climate change would worsen Australia's fire risk, and yet those warnings have been ignored."

The letter calls upon Prime Minister Scott Morrison as well as politicians from both major parties to unite and put partisan politics aside for the sake of Australia's future.



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The group of scientists

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"That same science tells us these extreme events will only grow worse in the future without genuine concerted action to reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases.



NSW RFS crews extinguish a fire that crossed the Monaro Highway, four kilometres north of Bredbo, NSW, on Sunday. Picture: Sean Davey/AAP

"We, the undersigned climate, weather and fire scientists, call on our country's leaders and policymakers to develop science-informed policies to combat human-caused climate change. "To be successful, these policies must urgently reduce Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions and lead to constructive engagement and agreements with other world leaders for co-ordinated global climate action."

They mention that the bushfires which ravaged large parts of Victoria, NSW and South Australia this summer were impacted by a changing climate. And, whether you like it or not, humans are responsible.

"Human-caused climate change is worsening fire-weather and bushfires in southern and eastern Australia," [the group says on its website](#).

It points out that Australia's climate is warming as part of an "unequivocal global warming trend" and that "2019 was Australia's hottest and driest year on record".



Scientists have urged Australia's leaders to do more to combat climate change. Picture: AFP/2019 Planet Labs, Inc.

"The average temperature for the whole of Australia in 2019 was 1.5C above the 1961–1990 climatological average, and 1.9C above the 1911–1940 average, noting that the national temperature dataset commences in 1910."

They warned that increased fires were not the only part of "a deadly equation" for Australia if change doesn't happen now — other predictions include Sydney and Melbourne experiencing 50C days by 2040.

"Scientists by nature tend to be conservative," University of New South Wales Canberra fire researcher Professor Jason Sharples said.

"It's important to remember that what we are seeing now are the dangerous and costly impacts of just 1C of global warming. Yet while our climate changes rapidly, Australia's climate change policies stand still and the world is on track for 3C or more of warming by the end of this century."



📷 The Myall Creek fire in central NSW. Photo: Cynthia Bodycote

The Prime Minister on Friday addressed the National Press Club in Canberra where he preferred hazard reduction over emissions reduction. He said the former is “even more important” than the latter.

Mr Morrison did acknowledge the need to reduce emissions, claiming Australia is “playing our part”.

“Of course we know that Australia, on its own, cannot control the world’s climate, as Australia accounts for just 1.3 per cent of global emissions,” he said.

“We also know that no fire event can be attributed to the actions of any one country on emissions reduction.

“But Australia must play its part and we are playing our part. Taking action is agreed.

“Our action though, is a balanced and responsible emissions reduction plan to reduce emissions by 26 per cent through to 2030 that we took to the Australian people at the last election.”

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Originally published as [50C days ahead for Sydney, Melbourne](#)